

A
FUNERAL-SERMON

For the Reverend

Mr. *Tho. Risley*, A.M.

AND

Sometime Fellow of *Pembroke-Colledge* in OXFORD.

With some short

MEMOIRS
OF HIS
LIFE.

By CHARLES OWEN. *K*

LONDON:

Printed for EMAN. MATTHEWS, *at the*
Bible in Pater-noster-Row; and J. HARRISON,
at the Royal-Exchange. 1716.

[Price bound, 6 d.]





T O

Mr. John Risley.

S I R,

WHEN we review the Death of our pious Relatives, it's very proper to alleviate our Sorrow with this Thought, That to such, to die is to be born ; they no sooner die out of this miserable State, but they are born into the happy World above.

The Grave, indeed, to which their Bodies are confin'd, affords a gloomy Spectacle, but then we shou'd consider, that our Lord Redeemer, who has sanctify'd that dark Place by lying in it, is Guardian of their Dust, and that the Hour is coming in which Death shall be swallowed up in Victory, and their Souls and Bodies be for ever with the Lord.

It was the prospect of this bright Scene that animated your good Father in all his Traverses thro' this deceitful World, as Christian and Minister, in both which Capacities he has given you a fair Copy to transcribe after.

The Blessing of God on his Endeavours, not only to Moralize but to Christianize his Family,

leaves no room to doubt your inheriting his *Christian Virtues* ; this Privilege of being made a *Christian* before you are made a *Minister*, is an Instance of immense Goodness, and I hope you have a just relish of it ; for how sad is it to be destitute of that Grace we offer to others, and to drop into that fiery Lake we so frequently warn others against !

Young Timothy was exhorted to save himself and them that heard him ; and indeed no Man can heartily promote the Salvation of others, who lives in the neglect of his own.

Permit me to recommend to your Imitation the Conduct of your dear Father, as far as he was a Follower of *Jesus Christ*, more particularly,

Let the Ends you propose to your self in undertaking the Sacred Office, be Right, Holy, Spiritual, and free from all Carnal Views, without which you cannot expect your Ministry should be attended with Success and Comfort.

Suit your Preparations to the several Capacities of your Auditors ; you preach to a mix'd Multitude, who border on an awful Eternity : Oh, let the sight of miserable Objects move your fervent Compassion ! How can you see 'em hang over the Mouth of Hell, and not weep over them ? He who knows the Terrors of the Lord and the Worth of immortal Souls, will use the most pressing Incentives to perswade Men to flee from the Wrath to come.

Dismal is the Story of a Gentleman, who, when he made his Will, gave his Soul to God, his Body

D E D I C A T I O N. v

dy to the Grave, and his Chaplain to the Devil, because he had suffered him to go on in his Sins, and did not rebuke him and advertise him of his Danger.

Enforce your Ministerial Instructions by an Exemplary Life : Let your whole Conversation be a living Sermon, for Men are more led by Examples than Precepts ; the Faces of those who converse with God in the Mount, shou'd shine with a distinguishing Brightness : A Divine shou'd answer his Name : Let your Converse be instructive, and your Moderation be known unto all Men, for that Religion which is void of Charity, is but an empty Show, and makes no better Harmony in the Ears of Heaven, than sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal.

Be cloathed with Humility and Meekness, Ornaments well becoming the Servants of the humble Jesus. The renowned Elliot, Apostle of the North-American Indians, usually complimented young Students with this Expression, Humilia-mini Juvenes, Humiliamini.

Keep up and encourage pious Conference, Occasional as well as stated Days of Prayer ; neglect not the great Ordinance of Catechising, thereby your Publick Performances will be more intelligible and useful : If you love Jesus, feed his Lambs.

Such was the Success of Catechising among the Waldenses, that when certain Jesuits were sent amongst them to corrupt their Children, they found them too well princip'l'd to be seduc'd, there being those of seven Years old who were able to

baffle them, whereby they were forc'd to return with Confusion and Disappointment.

I inscribe the ensuing Discourse, with a short Account of your worthy Father's Life, to you, as knowing none who have so good a Right to it, in as much as you have entered into his Labours among that People whom he so long presided over.

The scantiness of the Memoirs must be attributed to the scarcity of written Materials, which you know were next to none, your Reverend Father having left no Papers behind him proper for such a Design.

That a double Portion of the deceas'd Elijah's Spirit may rest upon you, and enable you to fulfil your Ministry, is the unfeigned Prayer of,

S I R,

Your assured Friend,

Warrington,
July 10. 1716.

7 OC 63

Charles Owen.



2. KINGS. II. 12.

— *My Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.*



THESE Words are occasion'd by the Death of *Elijah*, a great Prophet in *Israel*, the second Man who went up to Heaven without going down to the Grave; *Enoch* was the first who had the Honour of being translated to Glory without tasting of the bitter Brook in the way; and here the same Honour is confer'd on *Elijah*, who goes up bodily in a *Chariot of Fire*, i. e. under a Guard of Angels, who assumed that Form in conducting him to the supream Mansions, thereby signifying our Lord's Ascension.

While he lived on Earth, he was the peculiar Favourite of Heaven, where he had such Interest, that upon his Request there was no Rain in *Israel* for three Years and six Months.

He was the great Reformer of that Land, but his Zeal for the Divine Honour, and his Nonconformity

formity to the Laws of Worship establish'd by King *Abah*, soon exposed him to Persecution, which obliged him to leave his Native Country.

In his Travels he visits *Zidon*, feeds the *Sareptan* Widow by a Miracle, raises her Child from the Dead, and becomes the first Prophet of the *Gentiles*; about this time he fasted 40 Days and Nights, when he was supported and refresh'd by Divine Interviews: These are some of the glorious Achievements of this Holy Man, who made his ascent to Heaven by Translation, and not Dissolution, which leads me to the Text: *And he cry'd, my Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof.*

Here we have *Elisha's* Lamentation after his departing Master and Minister; it was a publick Loss, for he was the *Chariot of Israel*, &c. i. e. the Defender of his Country; the import of which I'll consider, by shewing,

I. That Ministers are Fathers of their People; *My Father, my Father.*

II. That they are the Defence of a People; *The Chariots of Israel*, &c.

III. How they contribute to the Defence of a People.

I. *Ministers are Fathers of their People:*

They are so in respect of Conversion, Affection, Care, Provision and Council.

1. Ministers may be said to be Fathers of their People, as they are means of their Conversion, *Gal. 4. 19. My little Children of whom I travail in Birth again till Christ be formed in you.* He stiles 'em Children, because converted by his Ministry. *1 Cor. 4. 15. Tho' you have ten thousand Instructors in Christ,*
yet

yet ye have not many Fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you thro' the Gospel, i. e. he was the Instrument of their new Birth; our first Birth makes us Children of the World, our second Birth Children of God.

Hence it is that holy Ministers are said to be *Co-workers with God*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. not as Co-efficients or Authors of Grace; for that sacred Treasure is deposited in the Hands of our Redeemer, as the sole Dispenser of it; it's the Gift of God, and distributed by Sovereign Prerogative.

We are Publishers, not Dispensers of the unsearchable Riches of Christ, Eph. 3. 8. Ministers may weep over hard Hearts, but it's not in their power to soften them; may pray and prophesy over dry Bones, but can't breathe into them the Spirit of Life; they may cry aloud, but they speak to deaf Creatures, till God gives them the hearing Ear; so that we are not Lords, but Ministers of your Faith.

The Ministry of Reconciliation is the appointed means of your Recovery, and has always been made effectual to that end more or less; the very Leaves of this Tree have a Sanative Virtue, and have healed the Nations: Grace is a Beam derivative from the Sun of Righteousness, but darted into the Soul thro' the Medium of the Gospel read and heard. *Luther* even by reading the Bible, was turned from Popery; *St. Augustin* was converted by reading *Rem. xiii. 12, 13, 14.* *St. Cyprian* by reading *Jonah*; *Junius* by reading *St. John's Gospel*; and as to the Word preach'd, Thousands have been conducted by it from Darkness to Light.

2. Ministers are Fathers of their People in Affection. No bond of Love is so strong, as that between spiritual Fathers and their People, especially
such

such of 'em as they have been instrumental to reconcile to God, 2 Cor. ii. 4. *That you might know the Love which I have more abundantly to you.*

Good Ministers love the Souls of their People as their own, and therefore count no Time better spent, than that spent in the Service of their Faith; nothing but Compassion to the Souls of Men can make 'em so active and unwearied in the Work of the Lord, and so willing to sacrifice all that's dear to 'em for their sakes, *Phil. ii. 17, 18.*

Bishops, said St *Ferom*, are not Lords but Fathers; and no Parents are more tenderly affected towards their Children, than they are towards those under their Charge; so dear is their Affection, they are content to have their Names blotted out of the Book of the *Living*, rather than they shou'd perish for ever: Nothing pleases them more than the Profit of their Hearers, and nothing sits so heavy on their Minds, as the Unreformedness of Men under their Ministry: While others mind the Fleece only, good Ministers make the Salvation of their Flock their main Business.

It's very useful for the furtherance of the Gospel, that People be apprized of their having a Share in the Affections of the Minister; let us but convince Men that we sincerely love them, and they'll attend the Word with greater pleasure, be more open to Conviction, and receive Reproofs with a more becoming Temper and Gratitude. What Christ did to the Bodies of Men upon Earth, was very justly interpreted to be an Instance of his Affection, by which means their Minds were more readily disposed to entertain the Doctrine which he preached.

3. Ministers are Fathers for Care, Provision, and Counsel, 1 Theff. ii. 11. *And charg'd every one of you as a Father does his Children.*

Fathers

Fathers are indispenſibly obliged by their Place, to give their Children the beſt Inſtructions, and to command them that they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19.

Thus Miniſters are to conduct us thro' the firſt Radiments of Religion, and go before us in the Path that leads to our Father's Houſe in the upper World; they are nurſing Fathers, and feed their Children with Knowledge and Underſtanding, giving every one their Portion in due ſeaſon, Meat to the Strong, the pure Milk of the Word without Deceit, to new-born Babes, that they may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. τὸ λογικὸν ἄδελφον γάλα.

That Word which was ſpiritual Seed to beget, is Food to ſtrengthen; the Children of the World lie grov'ling on the Earth, feed on Duſt with the accuſed Serpent, while good Men are reſreſh'd with hidden and heavenly Manna. Well then, honour your Miniſters, and regard their Dictates.

1. Honour your ſpiritual Fathers, 1 Theſſ. v. 12, 13. *We beſeech you, Brethren, to know them that labour among you, and to eſteem them very highly, (or more exceedingly, ſo the Greek) in love for their Work's ſake, ὡς ἐκπαιωτῶν.* It is recorded as a Commendation of the Galatians, that they received St. Paul as an Angel of God, even as Jeſus Chriſt, cap. iv. ver. 14.

A juſt value for Miniſters contributes not a little to the Succeſs of their Miniſtry; on the other hand, a diſeſteem of the Miniſterial Order and Office, has been always attended with a Contempt of Religion, and where-ever it prevails, not only deſtroys Religion, but introduces wild Anarchy and Confuſion into the State.

Hence it is that in all States, *Jewiſh* and *Pagan* as well as *Chriſtian*, the Miniſters of Religion have been

been greatly honour'd: Among the *Jews* the Sacred Function was treated with peculiar Reverence. *Gamaliel*, a Teacher of the Law 'tis said, was had in Reputation among the People, or was precious to 'em, *τιμωμενος*, *Acts* v. 2.

Among the Ancient Heathen the Priesthood was in such Esteem, that the Princes themselves assumed the Priestly Office; thus *Numa*, *Anius*, &c. were both Kings and Priests, and for this cause Priests were crown'd with Garlands. The Priests of *Mars* were in such Honour among the *Romans*, that none but Noblemen were admitted to the Sacerdotal Dignity. Among the *Egyptians* none were Priests but Philosophers, and none chosen Kings but out of the Priesthood.

The *Saxon* Ministers of Old were had in such Reputation, that all Wrongs done to them were doubly punish'd; nay more, if a Minister came between two Armies just going to engage, they wou'd forbear till he was gone.

The *Mahometan* *Mufti* or High-Priest is had in great Reverence among the *Turks*; as is also the Pope and Body of the Clergy among the *Romanists*; all agreeing this to be a true Principle in Divinity, That a venerable and pious Esteem of the Ministry contributes very much to the preservation and improvement of Religion.

But respect to Ministers was never better discover'd than in the practice of the ancient Christians, who treated them with Regard and Reverence; it was with a great deal of Justice and Gratitude, that Ministers were then look'd upon as the common Parents of Christians, whom as such they honour'd and obey'd, and to whom they repair'd for Direction in all important Cases.

This respect the Primitive Christians paid their Ministers

Ministers was very commendable, tho' in Time it came to be misimproved, when the Christian Church found shelter under the Wings of the *Roman Eagle*, during the Reign of *Constantine*, and afterwards.

I would not be thought to plead for idolizing Ministers, or gratifying proud and ambitious Minds; but for the Honour of the Holy Ministry, that is grown into Contempt among the Profane; the Reputation of the Ministry must be retrieved before the Success of it can be revived.

The Christian Ministry is an Office not calculated for worldly Ends, therefore secular Honour and Grandeur, which ill suits it, is not that I argue for: This sacred Office, which is Spiritual, is so far from receiving any real Lustre from outward Pomp, that it has rather clouded it, giving Men occasion to value it rather for those human Appendages, than for its intrinsic Divine Nature.

That Esteem for the Ministry I would urge, ought to be founded only in the Glad-Tydings of Salvation it brings to us; and in those spiritual and eternal Blessings, good Ministers above all other Men, are instrumental of conveying to Mankind: such as thus fulfil their Ministry are worthy of double Honour.

2. *Regard their Dictates.* 1 Cor. 4. 16. *I beseech you, be ye Followers of me.* Which supposes Ministers should be Patterns of Holiness to their People, as well as Preachers of it: A greater Honour we cannot put upon our spiritual Fathers, than to adorn the Gospel they preach by a religious Life; the Voice of God is in the Voice of the Ministry: every Sermon they deliver agreeably to the Divine Oracles, has a Divine Authority imprest upon it, and is as much God's Message as a Voice from Heaven.

B

Should

Should an Angel from above, or a Messenger detach'd from beneath come, and in the Name of God, inform us of our Duty, we should think our selves very much concern'd to comply with the Message, and yet those could not urge any thing more necessary to influence our Practice than Ministers do; the same Motive, the same Encouragements would be made use of by them that are by us; and tho' the unusualness of such an Appearance might fright you into some hasty Resolves, yet no greater Advantage could be obtain'd by it, than by the ordinary Ministry; for our Lord assures us, that such as are Proof against *Moses* and the *Prophets*, or the ordinary Means of Grace, would not believe tho' one rose from the Dead.

My Son (says *Solomon*) *keep thy Father's Commandments, bind them continually on thy Heart, and tye 'em about thy Neck*, Prov. 6. 20, 21. Referring to the *Phylacteries* under the Law, which, according to *Jerom* and *Chrysostom*, were Pieces of Parchment whereon were written the Ten Commandments, and several Sections of the Law, as *Exod.* 13. 2. to ver. 10. inclusively from ver. 11. to 16. and *Deut.* 6. 4. to v. 9. *Deut.* 11. 13. to ver. 21. These the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* carry'd about their Hands and Arms, to the end they might have the Law of God before their Eyes and in continual Remembrance.

Thus the Wise Man instructs us, that the faithful Retention of the Word is a Debt not only due to our selves, but also to our spiritual Fathers, who spend and are spent in the Service of our Souls.

II, *Ministers are the Defence of a People. The Champions and Horsemen of Israel.*

All good Ministers are so, but some more eminently, tho' treated by an ungrateful World, as disturbers

sturbbers of the Publick Peace. Thus *Ahab* accosts *Elijah* with a, *Art thou he that troublest Israel?* 1 *Kings* 18. 17. Here the Guardian of *Israel* is censur'd as the Troubler of the Land; it is no new Thing for the best of Men to be misrepresented, and cry'd down as publick Grievances.

Thus *Jason* and the Brethren in his House, who were Non-Conformists to the Publick Worship at *Thessalonica*, were reproached for Persons that turned the World up-side down, *Acts* 17. 5, 6. *Tertullus*, the Orator, accuses *St. Paul* to be a pestilent Fellow; a Plague or Pestilence it self in the Abstract, as the Original renders it *λοιμωον*, *Acts* 24. 1 ---- 5. Thus the Devil cloaths Men in Bears Skins, and turns his Dogs loose upon them.

Whatever Calamities besel the Nations in the beginning of Christianity, the poor Christians who were Dissenters from the National Establishment, were immediately charg'd with them, and upon this Pretence instantly exposed to the Lions.

Such was their hatred, that when they found no Faults, they devised them; since they could charge no real Scandal on the Primitive Christians, their Enemies rais'd and artfully spread false Reports, viz. That they worshipped the Head of an As, drunk the Blood of Children, committed Fornication and Incest in their Meetings for religious Worship, as *Minutius Felix* tells us.

Next to the Original Enmity, one grand Spring of this Hatred of good Men, is Ignorance of them. If the *Jews* had known the Lord of Glory, would they have persecuted and crucify'd him? Were the inward Rectitude and Excellency of holy Men visible to their Enemies, they would soon cry out, These are the Servants of the most High God; Oh! let our Latter End be like theirs. Did Men know

the important and transcendent Worth of Religion, they would go and sell all to buy this Field of great Price.

Since then all who live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Reproach and Persecution, let us so live as Religion may be our only Crime ; let the Hatred of the Wicked move us also to Sincerity, to be Christians indeed, for what more sad than to be hated of God and Men ; of Men, because of the appearance of Religion ; of God, because there is no more but appearance.

But notwithstanding all the ill Treatment good Ministers meet with, they are the *Chariots of Israel and the Horsemen thereof*, the Strength and Defence of a People against the World, the Anger of God, and the Powers of Darknes.

1. *Good Ministers are the Defence of a People against the World.*

This Enemy is a powerful one, and by its Smiles and Frowns, often endangers the Salvation of those whose Habitations are in the Dust.

The Smiles of the World are the Kisses of an Enemy, and whomsoever it caresses it betrays ; and Oh ! what Multitudes have been thus flatter'd by it into Destruction ?

Now Ministers by their Office are to inform Men of their Danger, to discover the fatal Snare, and direct Men how to possess the World, so as not to be possess'd by it, to use it so as not to abuse it : It's necessary to remind 'em of their being Travellers towards the Eternal World, and that all their Earthly Enjoyments are but the Accommodations of an Inn, commonly known by the Title of *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*.

In strictness there is but one thing necessary, in comparison of which all Temporal Things are Trifles

fl'es and meer Amusements, so far from making us truly happy, that they cannot of themselves give us any real Pleasure, though they serve as Instruments of a few grateful Sensations, which the great Author of Nature produces in us by them.

The World is made to be used and not enjoy'd; therefore we must be taught not to make it our supreme and ultimate End, for its Contents are too low, mean and narrow a Portion for an immortal Soul. Christ, the Wisdom of God, chose a Life of Poverty, which is a practical Demonstration, that the Riches and Honours of the World, those Idols of Carnal Men's Esteem, are so far from producing true Felicity, that they are not of themselves eligible in the Number of real permanent Goods, and therefore they should be valued by us no further than they are in a lower degree conducive to our future Happiness.

A prosperous State is not always the best, for Snares grow in proportion to the increase of Wealth, and to whom much is given, of them much will be required, on which account we are caution'd not to set our Hearts upon encreasing Riches; when your Circumstances grow pleasing to you, suspect Poyson at the Root, and depend upon it, Satan, who knows how, will attempt to improve that Opportunity of enticing your Souls from God.

Dost thou know, Sinner, that if thou perish forever, it will be for loving the World too much, and God too little? Is it not the World that entices us to neglect our everlasting Happiness, and weakens those Impressions which arise from the belief of another Life? *all is vanity what*

By such Caveats as these; Ministers frequently warn you against the Allurements of this present evil World, and thereby contribute towards your Defence. *Pety* *that*

that is a Truth, what is it worth
is
precept duly regarded -

Ministers do likewise equally guard their People against the Temptations that may arise from the Frowns of the World, setting before them the recompence of Reward to encourage their perseverance in well-doing, and proposing to them the eternal Weight of Glory, as more than a Counterballance, to the light Afflictions of this Life, that are but for a Moment.

2. *Good Ministers are a Defence against the Anger of God.*

When incens'd Justice breaks in upon a People, and speaks to 'em by terrible Things, they stand in the Breach, wrestle with God, hold (as it were) his Hand, and divert the Current of Divine Wrath.

Thus, when a Plague was begun in *Israel*, *Aaron* the Priest made Atonement, and so stay'd the Progress of that desolating Judgment, *Numb.* xvi. 47, 48. When the Land was threaten'd with a Deluge of Misery, God complains of the false Prophets, that they would not stand in the Breach to turn away the Wrath of God by their Intercession, *Ezek.* xiii. 5.

When Judgments are ready to break in upon a People, and the Spirit of Prayer is departed from 'em, it's a dreadful Omen. God having denounc'd a terrible Sentence against the Kingdom of *Judah*, complains, that among all the People, there were none who endeavoured to prevent the Execution of it by Prayer and Repentance, *Ezek.* xxii. 30. *I sought for a Man among them that should make up the Hedge, and stand in the Gap before me, for the Land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.*

The People of *Israel* were threaten'd with a Foreign Invasion, and there were none, no not among the Priests, who would interpose with God to a-

vert

vert the Storm ; such was the Corruption of the Jewish Clergy at this Time, which is noted by the Prophet as a dangerous Symptom of approaching Ruin.

3. *Good Ministers are a Defence against the Powers of Darkneſs.*

These are old and unwearied Adversaries, what Devastations have they made upon the Humane Race ? Such is their Hatred, that they daily tempt us, tho' they know God will severely punish them for it.

But faithful Ministers are the Chariots of tempted *Israel*, against the Assaults of those invisible and cruel Enemies ; they rescue enslaved Souls from under their Power.

It's by the Ministry of the Word that Satan falls like Lightning from Heaven, that the Prince of this World is cast out, and the Foundation of his Empire torn up, *Luke x. 18.*

No sooner was the Standard of the Gospel set up, but all Nations flew to it as Doves to their Windows ; those mighty Conversions could not but deeply affect the Angels of Darkneſs, and it added to their Mortification, to see their Kingdom overthrown by Men, over whom they had flatter'd themselves as Conquerors in the Fall of *Adam*.

Ministers still stand on the Breach, and wrestle with Principalities and Powers in High-Places.

There are three Breaches at which Satan usually enters, *Ignorance, Error, and Prophaneneſs*, which Breaches Ministers above all Men help to repair.

1. *Ignorance.* This is the Distemper and Darkneſs of the Mind, the Empire in which Satan rules, he is the Prince of Darkneſs, his Kingdom is the Kingdom of Darkneſs, and his Works are the Productions

ductions of Darkneſs, *Eph. vi. 12. Col. i. 13. 1 John ii. 11.*

Minifters ſtep on this Breach, and hold out the Light of the Goſpel, the Brightneſs of which the Powers of Hell cannot endure or ſtand before : It were not poſſible ſo many Souls ſhould be eternally ruin'd, if Satan had not firſt put out their Eyes. Ah cruel Prince ! who blinds all his Vaſſals that they may never know a better Maſter, or a better Condition ; they would never follow him ſo by Crowds to Hell, if the Eyes of their Underſtandings were opened, *2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.*

It's almoſt incredible what Ignorance abounds in the World, even among thoſe that have been viſited with the Day-Spring from on High ; it is by this Engine that the Devil has enlarged his Territories, and continues ſo many miſerable Wretches in the Houſe of Bondage ; did Men but know what they do by Sinning, they would quickly ſtop, and dread to live one Hour longer in an unregenerate State ; the Devils with all their united Strength could never influence ſo many Men to deſtroy themſelves, did not their Ignorance give a handle to their Temptations.

Minifters are the Light of the World, theſe ſhine as Stars in the Firmament of the Church, by whoſe Agency God darts Beams of Divine Light into the Soul, *opens the Eyes of Men, and turns 'em from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God, Acts xxvi, 18.*

Gideon's Army conquer'd the Midianites by lighted Torchcs, which they carry'd in Earthen Veffels, this typify'd the Ruin of Satan's Kingdom, by that Light which now ſhines out of Earthen Veffels, for ſuch Goſpel Minifters are, in whom this Treafure of Light is deposited, 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7. We have this Treafure in Earthen Veffels. The

The King of Kings condescends to be served in Earthen Vessels, by these he casts out Devils ; he has Vessels of Gold, glorious Angels that attend his Throne, but he'll be served also by Mortals, Vessels of Earth, in these he sets up a Tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness, *who is the true Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.*

He might have employed his Golden Vessels the Holy Angels, to destroy the Kingdom of Darkness, but this Honour he puts upon Men, who are equally subject to Passions with our selves, that the Excellency of the Power might be of God only.

2. *Error is another dangerous Breach at which the Father of Lies enters.* Ministers stand in this Breach and lift up a Banner, *because of the Truth*, Psal. lx. 4. i. e. in Defence of the Truth. Christ the great Instructor of his Church, is the Truth of God ; it's he that rectifies the Mistakes of Men by the Gospel, the Light of Truth.

The way to Heaven is overshadowed by a Cloud of Errors, so that it is difficult to find it out ; in this case God promises, *Thine Eyes shall see thy Teachers, and thine Ears shall hear a Word behind thee, saying, This is the Way, walk ye in it*, Isai. xxx. 20, 21.

The great Dispute in the World is, which is the true Religion, or best Way : The Jew says it's his : No, says the Turk, but it's mine ; the Papists take it for granted they are in the right ; the Protestants deny it, and affirm all the World to be Heterodox besides themselves ; among Protestants there be various Denominations, and each of these think their own way best. It's not my Province to examine the different Pleas of these several Pretenders to
Infal-

Infallibility, I'll only make this general Observation, that there is such a Thing as the true Religion, and that it may be known by these three Marks among others.

1. *That's the best Religion that makes the best Men:* The true Religion is a living Religion, Holiness to the Lord is writ upon it, and upon all its Professors; it does not consist in meer bodily Service, but in the universal, sincere and constant Practice of the Divine Will, as far as we have attained unto the Knowledge of it.

2. *That's the true Religion that makes Men most Charitable, or most in Love with God and their Neighbours.* An uncharitable religious Man is a Contradiction in Terms. Whosoever hates his Brother is a Murderer, 1 John iii. 15. "That the Christian Religion, (says Dr. Cave) was immediately designed to improve and perfect the Principles of Humane Nature, appears from this, that it strictly enjoins and promotes that natural Kindness and Compassion, which is one of the prime and essential Inclinations of Mankind:---Wherever the Gospel is cordially comply'd with, it begets such a sweet and gracious Temper of Mind, as makes us humble, affable, courteous and charitable, ready and disposed to every good Work, prompt to all Offices of Humanity and Kindness, it files off the ruggedness of Men's Natures, banishes a rude, churlish and pharisaical Temper, and infuses a more calm and treatable Disposition; it commands us to live and love as Brethren, to love without Hypocrisy, to be kindly affectioned one towards another. *Prim. Chris. part 3. cap. 2.*

Charity is made the visible Badge of those who are truly Christian, 1 John iii. 14. we know that we

we have passed from Death unto Life, *because we love the Brethren. By this shall all Men know ye are my Disciples, if you love one another.*

This was the Characteristick of Christians in the best Ages of Religion, who were so remarkable for their Charity, that it became a Proverb among the Heathen, *See how these Christians love one another.*

3. *That is the true Religion which the Devil hates most.* In all Ages it's observable, that his greatest Spite has been always against the Professors of true Religion: In the Contest between us and the Papists concerning the Truth of our respective Religions, let us bring them to this Touchstone.

Has the Devil any cause to hate Men for Image or Angel-Worship, for Superstition and Idolatry, for keeping People in Blindness, by locking up the Scriptures in an unknown Tongue from 'em?

Has he any reason to persecute that Religion that is made up of Formality, Pomp, and a meer Show? No, for these are no Enemies to him, but to the Souls of Men; such Men's Religion does the Devil's Kingdom no hurt, therefore he lets 'em alone, for he has 'em bound, *Mat. xii. 29.*

But that Religion which comes nearest the Holy Scripture, and gives God his due in Spiritual Worship; that Ministry that is always striving to bring Souls to God, and from the outward Form to the power of Godliness, Satan can't endure.

The Devil plays not the small Game of cheating Men of their Money, but of their Religion; hence we read of Idolatrous Principles among Heathens, damnable Traditions among *Jews*, cursed Errors and Heresies among Christians, *Doctrines of Devils* — the grand Enemy has done this: He cannot see a good Field of Wheat, but he immediately does what he can to sow Tares in it.

It's

It's the Devil's Cunning to destroy Men by something that goes under the Name and Appearance of Religion ; thus Christ was crucify'd from the Principle of the *Jews* Traditional Religion, which oblig'd 'em not to receive the *Messiah* in that Form of a Servant which our Lord appeared in. The Papists also have adopted an Article into their Religion, by which they are engaged to extirpate Heresy, as they invidiously term the Reformation. It is sad when Balm becomes Poyson, and Men become Enemies to Religion, by the very Principles of their Religion.

Upon the whole, I leave the Reader to apply these Characters, and judge who is in the right, only let him carry with him these two Cautions :

1. That Men are not always in the right, because their Religion is establish'd by the Laws of the Land, for thus Popery is establish'd in the Popish Dominions, and the *Alcoran* among the *Turks*.

2. That involuntary Errors, as such (or Mistakes of Judgment, whereby we assent to what is not true) are not damnable. I mean such unavoidable Mistakes as remain after a sincere and diligent Application to find the Truth ; or when Men, by the Providence of God, are contrived into such Circumstances, as render their attaining to better Knowledge morally impracticable, in that case, a Man may be mistaken in many Things, without any Crime or Fault.

“ But be that as it will, sure it is, that the Errors of such People spring not from Choice or Will, but from the force of what they think Scripture and Reason, and if (as Mr. *Chillingworth* argues) by reason of the variety of Tempers, Abilities, Educations, and unavoidable Prejudices, whereby Men's Understandings are variously
“ formed

“ formed and fashioned, they do embrace several
 “ Opinions, whereof some must be Erroneous;
 “ to say, God will damn them for such Errors, who
 “ are lovers of him, and lovers of Truth, is to
 “ rob Man of his Comfort, and God of his Good-
 “ ness. *Answer to the Preface quoted in the Innocency
 of Error asserted, where this Subject is treated of at
 large.*

A Man is obliged always to follow his Judgment
 tho' it is Erroneous, for Conscience (or our Judgment
 concerning our Actions) is a Power which God
 has implanted in us, on purpose to be the Rule
 of our Actions; now Conscience being our Guide,
 and Villany and Hypocrisy being the swerving from
 it, acting against Conscience must be Villany, *ibid.*
p. 23. Rom. xiv. 23.

3. *A third Breach at which Satan enters is Pro-
 phaneness, the common Precipice by which Men
 drop into the bottomless Pit.*

Ministers stand upon this Breach, *cry aloud, lift
 up their Voice like a Trumpet, shew People their
 Transgressions, and the House of Jacob their Sins,*
Esai. lviii. 1.

How sad is it to see so many Men hang over the
 Mouth of Hell by the feeble Thread of Life, and
 yet insensible of their Danger: Who can behold
 those miserable Objects, or preach to 'em, without
 weeping over them?

When St. Paul saw the *Athenians* addicted to I-
 dolatry, his Spirit was stirred within him, *Acts*
xvii. 16. And should not the sight of Men just rea-
 dy to fall into Hell, move our Compassion, untie
 our Tongues, and make us cry out, *Lord, have Mer-
 cy on those blinded Creatures who have no Pity on them-
 selves! Oh, stretch out thine Almighty Arm to rescue
 them as Brands out of the Fire! Oh, rouse 'em out of*
 C *their*

26. A FUNERAL-SERMON

their stupid and lethargick State, before the Decree bring forth, and there be no remedy for their perishing Souls !

Now the great End of the Ministry is to direct Men how to escape the Pollutions that are in the World thro' Sin, and how to flee from the Wrath to come ; and there is no faithful Minister who does not follow his Sermons with fervent Expostulations with God, such as these, *Lord, I have been this Day concern'd in a very awful Undertaking, delivering a Message to my Fellow-Creatures of Salvation and Damnation, from thee the living God ; Oh, accompany the Word with thy Grace, that it may become the savour of Life to them that heard it ! Oh, let none of them perish for ever ! Breathe, O Lord, upon those dry Bones to whom I have been speaking in thy Name ! Cause the Spirit of Life to enter into them, that their Souls may live !*

III: We'll enquire, *How Ministers contribute to the Defence of a People ?* They do it by Preaching, by a Pattern of Holy Life, and by Prayer.

1. *Ministers are the Defence of a People by their Preaching.* The Word of the Lord is that Sword of the Spirit, by which the Horsemen of Israel do wonderful Things ; it is by Spiritual Weapons the Spirits of Darkness must be vanquish'd.

As the Priests, by sounding Rams Horns before Jericho, caused the Walls thereof to rumble down, so Ministers, by the joyful Sound of the Gospel, demolish the strong Holds of Satan : The Word is no other than the Power of God, the Arm of the Lord, Ministration of the Spirit, the Word of Life, and the Rod of his Strength.

It is by this Word that Men are summon'd to Repent, and to forsake their Sins, which threaten them

them with Ruin ; and where their Hearts are open to Instruction, the Glory of the Lord shall dwell in that Place, and upon the Glory he'll create a Defence.

As Sin lays waste the Heritage of God, so the Reformation produc'd by the Word preach'd, is the Safeguard and Stability of the Times.

2. *Ministers are the Defence of a People by the Pattern of a Holy Life.* They are Stars in the Right-Hand of Christ, to give Light to them that sit in Darkneß, and in the Shadow of Death, to guide their Feet into the way of Peace and Safety, Luke i. 79.

Their bright Conversation so shines among Men, that they see the Power of God's Grace in it, and are thereby induc'd to give Glory to God, who has given such Power to Men, and are provoked by a holy Emulation to imitate their good Works.

The Life of a good Minister is the Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, and such a quickning Voice as sometimes reaches the Ears of them that are Dead in Trespasses and Sins : The pious Examples of Preachers are the best Sermons, and Thousands can understand the meaning of a good Life, that cannot apprehend the meaning of a good Sermon.

As a Candle lights which way soever it goes, so Ministers shou'd be Preachers wheresoever they are, not only in their Pulpits but Practice ; and this is the way to convince an Infidel World, that there is a future State, that there is a real Truth in Religion, and a mighty Power in it, to change the Heart and elevate the Mind above Earthly Things.

Such adorn the Gospel, and render it amiable in the Eyes of the World, whereby Prejudices are removed, and a Way made for its Entrance into the Heart.

In the Primitive Times nothing recommended the Christian Religion more, than the holy Lives of Ministers and People, which had no little influence on the Conversion of *Justin Martyr*, and others.

Among the Heathens of Old, the Garments of the Priests were to be pure and clean from Spots, which was significative of that Purity of Life required of 'em, *puraque in veste Sacerdos. Virg.* He (lays one of 'em) *who has the Charge of Divine Service must be Holy, not for a set Time, but all his Days.* Demosth. in Orat. contra Tim.

In many Places the Ecclesiasticks among the Modern Pagans, are Men of Exemplary Lives, particularly in *Siam* in the *East-Indies*, where *Tavernier* says, they are outwardly very Modest Men, and never seen to be Angry.

As Ministers generally excel the People in Gifts and learned Acquirements, so they should in Grace and Holiness; the Court of the Priests, into which the People might not enter, was most Holy; God expects greater Measures of Holiness from us than others, we converse with God in the Mount, and our Faces should shine, *Be ye clean that bear the Vessels of the Sanctuary, Isai. lvii. 11.* Tho' the Holiness of our Persons sanctifies not that which is Profane, yet the Impurity of our Persons and Lives may defile that which is Holy.

Examples are a kind of Instruction intelligible to all Persons, and often influences more than the most elegant and pathetick Sermons; therefore when Ministers go before their People in a Life of Holiness, and thereby provoke 'em to good Works, they contribute not a little to their Defence and Safety.

3. *Good Ministers defend a People by their Prayers.*
Praying Ministers are God's peculiar Favourites, greatly beloved, Men of Power and Interest in Heaven.

When *Israel* (who hanker'd after the Idols, as well as Onyons and Garlick of *Egypt*) had formed a God after the *Egyptian* Mode, the Anger of God was kindled against them: Now therefore, said God to *Moses*, *let me alone, that my Wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them*, *Exod.* xxxii. 10, 11. that is, Do not thou hinder me by thy Prayers for them.

Such a Minister is worth a thousand others, *Job* xxxiii. 23. *If there be a Messenger with him, one of a thousand.* Such was *Moses* in the Day of God's Indignation; such was *Phineas* in the time of the Plague; such was *Elijah* in the great Drought, he prayed, and upon his Request God sent Rain.

Thus, for *Paul's* sake, all the Ships Crew and Passengers (near 300 Souls) were saved, *Acts* xvii. there's no doubt but wicked Men are frequently favoured with Deliverances for the sake of their righteous Neighbours, who intercede with God for 'em; and we are not without Instances of dreadful Judgments on Places, upon the Death of good Men, especially good Ministers: One such is able to do more than many others.

Some Men have prided themselves in the Surname of *Great*; thus we read of *Antiochus*, *Alexander*, *Herod*, and *Pompey the Great*; there are many of God's Servants, tho' poor and contemptible in the sight of Men, that are great Men with God, and have done greater Things than the greatest of those Great Ones: For Example, Is not the saving of one Soul a greater matter than the destroying of a thousand Lives? Is it not a greater Work to

subdue Souls to Christ, than to enslave Bodies to Man's boundless Ambition? Those Heroes who affected the Appellation of Great, work'd together with the Devil to destroy Mankind; good Ministers work together with God to rescue miserable Souls from Destruction.

Thus you see the Weapons of their Warfare which are not Carnal but Spiritual, are powerful to pull down the strong Holds of Darkness, to ward off the Strokes of Divine Vengeance, and to procure and confirm the best of Blessings to a People over whom they preside as Watchmen, for the good of their Souls.

A P P L Y.

1. *Good Ministers are the greatest Blessings to a Land*; the Chariots and Horsemen thereof. Happy the People who abound in such Blessings. God threatens to bring a Famine of *Hearing* the Word, *Amos viii. 11.* not a Famine of *Reading* but *Hearing* it; intimating, that altho' we have Bibles, yet if there be no preaching, there is a Famine of the Word in the Land.

In the Primitive Church, a faithful Minister was dearer to 'em than the most valuable Earthly Blessings besides: When *Chrysostom*, Bishop of *Constantinople*, was driven by *Eudoxia* the Empress into Banishment, the People burst into Tears and cry'd out, *'Twas better the Sun should not shine than that Chrysostom should not preach.*

They could not then loose their Spiritual Guides but they look'd upon themselves as Orphans, resenting their Death with such deep and general Lamentation as if they had lost a common Father. When *Basil*, Bishop of *Cæsarea*, lay a Dying, the whole City came about him, not able to bear his
 Depar-

Departure from them, praying as if they would have forcibly detained his Soul in the Body.

As good Ministers are the greatest Blessings, so the want of 'em is a sore Judgment; it's hard to determine which is the greater Judgment, the decrease of faithful Ministers, or the increase of those that are otherwise.

It's certain, none are greater Enemies to Religion than ambitious, ignorant, wordly, or prophane Ministers: The degeneracy of the *Asian* Churches is charged upon the Angels of the Churches, or the Bishops of 'em, as some are pleas'd to understand it, *Rev. ii.* It is rare that a Land becomes full of Sin, but the Ministry of it are deeply involv'd in the Guilt; it's a true Proverb, *Like People like Priest*, *Hosea iv. 9.*

God seldom removes the Candlestick from a People, till their Lights grow dim, and go out in a Snuff: The removing of useful Ministers, presages Judgment; the swarming of prophane Ministers, procures it.

I have sometimes thought the State of the Land to be like that of the Old *Britains*, when God sent the *Saxons* among them, to be the severe Instruments of his Displeasure.

Venerable *Bede* says, " That after many Judgments they had labour'd under, God suddenly
" blest 'em with Peace and great plenty of the Fruits
" of the Earth, together with which Luxury grew
" up, and this was accompany'd with all manner of
" Wickedness, especially *Cruelty, Enmity against the*
" *Truth, Love of Lying and Dissimulation*, so that if
" any among 'em seem'd more candid or favourable to the Truth, he was hated and opposed by
" all, as the common Enemy of *Britain*; and these
" Things were done, not only by Secular Persons,
" but

“ but by the Flock of Christ and the Pastors there-
 “ of; these cast off the easy Yoak of Christ, and
 “ gave up themselves to *Drunkennes, Animosity,*
 “ *Strife, Contention, Envy,* and other Wickednesses
 “ of the like Nature. *Bede Eccles. Hist. I. 14.*

One would think almost he were a Writing the History of our Age, and describing the late and present State of this sinful Island, where all Flesh have corrupted their Ways, *How is the Gold become dim, the most fine Gold changed, Lament. Jeremiah's* Complaint may be apply'd to us, *viz. From the Prophets at Jerusalem is Prophaneness gone forth into all the Land, Jerem. xxiii. 15.*---- I'll not say of England what *Salvian*, a Priest of *Marseilles*, (who lived in the Vth Century) speaks of the Church in his Time, when it was over-run by the *Goths* and *Vandals*:

“ The very Church of God, (*says he*) which
 “ ought to study to appease the Wrath of God, doth
 “ most grievously provoke him; and besides, a ve-
 “ ry few forsake Sin; What is every Christian
 “ Congregation almost, but a Sink of Vices? How
 “ few will you find in the Church, that are not ei-
 “ ther Drunkards, or Gluttons, or Adulterers, or
 “ Fornicators, or Oppressors, or Luxurious, or
 “ Robbers, or Murderers, and that which is worse
 “ than all this, there is no End of them? *Salv. de Dei Gubern. lib. 3.*

Tho', thro' the Goodness of God, Things are not so bad with us, yet we have reason to fear, that the Cry of our Iniquities is come up to Heaven, for God is coming out of his Place to punish the Nations round about; and what are we better than others, that we should hope to escape?

2. *These Blessings must be removed. And he saw him no more, Text. Ministers, they encamp in this lower*

lower World, but for a short time ; they Fight the good Fight of Faith, and then the Sovereign King calls them home. Your Fathers, where are they, and the Prophets, do they live for ever ?

Have we seen them as our Teachers ? The Hour is coming we shall see them no more : Have they been to us *as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and their Words as an Honeycomb, sweet to the Soul, and Health to the Bones ?* The Time is approaching when their Mouths shall be stopp'd, and we shall hear them speaking in the Name of of Christ no more, *Ezek. xxxiii. 32. Prov. xvi. 24.*

Have we seen them as our Guides in publick Worship ? The Day is coming we shall see them no more : Have we seen 'em as Directors and Comforters of our Consciences ? In a very little time we shall see them no more ; all our Cisterns must be broken, and never repaired more, that we may live upon the Fountain that never fails ; these bright Stars that directed us to Christ, and conducted us in the way of our Duty, must set, and never appear more in this Horizon : Their Days are numbered, their Months determined, so long and no longer must they live ; their Work is cut out, and when that is done, they rest from their Labours.

3. *The Death of good Ministers is a great Loss.* When they die, the Glory is departed, and the Fences of *Israel* broken down : Their Death often portends Evil to the World, especially when such as are most eminent for Piety and Prayer are taken away.

Help, Men, Brethren and Fathers, mount the Breach, and wrestle with God, cry mightily to him, and spare not, for a divided and bleeding Nation ! Our Breach is wide, like the Sea, Oh ! pray that it be not widen'd more and more : Our chosen Men,
who

34 A FUNERAL-SERMON

who stood upon the Gap to divert the Storm, are fal'n : Our Chariots and Horsemen of *Israel* are cast into a deep Sleep : Our faithful Watchmen that stood upon our Walls, and never held their peace Day nor Night, are gone down to the place of Silence : Our powerful Intercessors, who as Princes prevailed with God, and held his Hand in the Day of his fierce Anger, are caused to cease from among us.

But my Business is not to excite your Grief so much as to direct it to its proper Ends, therefore shall conclude the whole with the subsequent Advices.

1. *Be sensible of the Breach made upon you ; and why the Author of Life is contending with you by the Death of your dearly beloved Pastor : What a Loss have you of a Minister, who naturally cared for your spiritual State ?*

Was he not a Father to you of this Congregation ? And were you not his Glory and Joy, and I hope, will be his *Crown of rejoicing, in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his Coming, 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.*

Can't many of you say, you were Begotten again to a lively Hope by his Ministry ? Did he not care for you as an affectionate Father for his Children ? You are now left desolate, but you have a Father in Heaven, who ever lives, and will provide for you ; nay, has provided already *Jehovah Fireh.*

Indulgent and Kind has the Providence of God been towards you above others, while many Congregations have been suddenly Widow'd, and left in an unsettled, divided Condition ; your ancient Minister has been spared to you, till he has qualify'd one out of his own Loins to succeed him : May the Spirit of your *Elijah* that is gone, rest upon him,

him, and may you, under his Care, flourish like the Palm Tree, bring forth Fruit till old Age, and remain fat and flourishing.

Let the destitute Widow, who is deprived of a most tender faithful Companion, trust in God, whose Compassions are unlimited: Your dear Relative is fallen asleep in Jesus, he'll awake and rise again at the great Day, and then you shall meet and part no more; the Trouble at parting now, will come infinitely short of that Pleasure which will attend your meeting then.

What a Loss have his dear Children! Say, My Father, my Father, the Guide of our Youth, thou art gone and our Eyes shall see thee no more: Oh! may we never forget the Instructions of such a Father; may the Voice of his Tears and ardent Prayers he put up for us, be heard in Heaven, thy Dwelling-Place! Hear, O Lord, those Supplications, and in faithfulness answer them: Oh! may we so live, as to give our dear Father an Opportunity to say, when Christ shall appear, Here I am, and the Children thou hast given me, and none of them is lost.

2. *Be thankful to God you enjoyed him so long.* God made him useful in this Country above 50 Years, and he has been your stated Minister above 30 Years.

The Ministry of Christ and *John Baptist* lasted not full 4 Years; and if we look into Church History, we shall find very few Ministers who labour'd so long in the Vineyard as yours did, especially with so much Vigour and Affection; for tho he was in the 87th Year of his Age, yet on the Lord's Day before he dy'd, he preach'd Twice, deliver'd the Lord's Supper, and pray'd, as usual, three times in his Family.

Acknow-

Acknowledge God in him now he is dead : You thank God for your Food when the Meat is taken away ; how much more ought we to do so for our spiritual Food, and the Dispensers of it, when they are gone ?

You have the more reason to be thankful, by reason of the good Success of his Ministry so visible among you, in that commendable Seriousness dispers'd through your Society by his successful Labours.

You have not only received the spiritual Food at his Hands, but have grown thereby ; and therefore you have double Reason to be thankful for the long enjoy'd Blessing of such a Minister.

3. *Let his Death remind you of your Departure*, the Time of which is at Hand. We are all hastning to the Tribunal of God, and Oh ! how soon shall you and I be there ? Oh ! thou who hast no Pleasure in the Destruction of Sinners, prepare us for those awful Solemnities, of Death and Judgment !

The Hour is fix'd, die we must, without Remedy ; we may sweeten the bitter Cup, but cannot avoid drinking it : When the Time comes, go we must, whether we will or no ; and when we die, our Eternal Condition is determin'd.

Death, that shuts up the Scene of Time, will usher us into an unchangeable World ; and what is most dreadful to think of, if we miscarry at Death we are irretrievably ruin'd ; for the Error of dying ill once, can never be rectify'd by dying well at another Time.

The Race we are in is for Eternity, and is to be run but once, we are within a few Moments of the End, so that Heaven will soon be won, or lost for ever. Can you believe this, and live quietly in your Sins ? Dare you die in an unconverted State ? If not, how then dare you live in it ?

2. Be

4. *Be followers of your deceased Minister, as he followed Christ.* Consider the excellent Pattern he left you to imitate; he exceeded most in all Parts of the Christian Life; his common Speech was serious and edifying, always chearful without Levity or profuse Liberry; he had the Happines of a sweet, affable, communicative Temper, which made his Conversation equally pleasant and instructive.

In him you might see the Primitive Simplicity reviv'd; his rejoycing was this, The Testimony of a good Conscience, that in godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, he had his Conversation in this World without Gall or Deceit.

As an able Divine and faithful Minister, he approved himself to God and your Consciences; a Workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

His Integrity and Humility convey'd a fresh Lustre to every other Grace, and to all his Performances. Tho Non-Conformity usually exposes to Scorn and Reproach, yet he had the Felicity of escaping all those particular Obloquies, which many others of the same Denomination undergo.

He lived in a chearful and constant Exercise of Faith, remarkably mortify'd to all sensitive Entertainments; such a Sun could not but Set without a Cloud; he lived so as to secure a Title to the House not made with Hands: and as he liv'd, so he dy'd under the refreshing Sense of Divine Love, not molested with any Doubts or Fears, but peaceably putting on Immortality, he slept in Jesus. Then mark this perfect Man, and behold this upright Man; for the End of this Man was Peace.

A short Account of Mr. THOMAS
RISLEY's Life, &c.



WHEN we consider with what Veneration not only the Names but Bodies of the Dead have been ever treated by all Nations, you'll not wonder to see this Tribute of Honour paid to the Memory of the Reverend and Pious Mr. *Thomas Risley*, who brings up the Rear of those Christian Heroes and Confessors, who were wormed out of the Church by that ungrateful Act, the Act of Uniformity.

He was descended from a reputable and religious Family near *Warrington*; his Father, who died 1670, aged 82, was an excellent Christian, a bright and becoming Ornament to his Profession; he was inspired with a generous loving Temper, which exerted it self on every just Occasion, of which it's no small Instance, that he allowed Yearly 5 *l.* to his Parish Minister, out of 40 *l. per Annum*.

Religion indeed is a publick Virtue, and wherever it obtains, disposes its Professors to universal Goodness; it does not consist in a meer avoidance of Evil, but doing good, that is the Balance in which we are to be weigh'd on the Day of Tryal.

The Spirit of Holiness is eminently a Spirit of Love to God and Mankind, it softens our rough Natures, and produces a Tenderness that mightily recommends Religion to such who are Strangers or averse to it. This brings to my Mind the admirable

ble Effects of one generous and charitable Act done by a few Christians in the IVth Century ; the Story is this in Substance. One *Pachomius*, a Pagan Soldier, coming with an Army almost starved into a Christian Town, the Christians of their own Accord did immediately Succour and Relieve them ; he wonder'd at so free and generous a Disposition, and enquired what sort of People they were ; it was answer'd, *They were Christians*, whose Profession was to hurt no Man, and to do Good to every Man ; which made such an Impression on the Soldier, that he embraced the Christian Religion, became a Disciple to *Palamon*, and an eminent Professor of the True Faith.

Eminent in this kind is a Passage, which that every way agreeable and excellent Man Mr. Tong mentions in the Life of the Reverend Mr. *John Shower*, which is of a certain religious and wealthy Merchant, who having heard of the Loss of a Ship in which he had Effects to the value at least of 1500 *l.* presently called to his Cash-keeper, and order'd him to distribute 100 *l.* among such poor Ministers and Christians as he directed ; for, says he, if it be going by 1500 *l.* at a Lump, it's time to make sure of some part of it before it be all gone, p. 3.

Mr. *Risley* the Father had two Sons, *John* and *Thomas*, *John* the Eldest was born 1628, *Thomas*, who is the Subject of the ensuing Treatise, born Aug. 27. 1630.

Their good Father, well knowing how much the Welfare even of Nations depends on the right management of Children, was very careful to give his two Sons Religious, as well as Liberal Education ; nor were his pious Endeavours in vain, for the early Ideas he form'd in their Minds of Virtue and Vice, did by the Divine Blessing make an effectual and indelible Impression.

Kingdoms as well as Families share in the good or bad Effects of Childrens Education ; thus the Empire of *Persia* flourish'd under the Government of *Cyrus* and *Darius*, who were brought up in Warlike Toyls and Labours, and were Strangers to the enervating Delights of a Court ; on the other hand, how did its Glories decline under their Sons *Cambyses* and *Xerxes*, who were educated in the luxurious Softness of the *Medes*, and Pleasures of an effeminate Palace ; and this was owing to their Fathers, who, while they were spreading the *Persian* Glory abroad, committed their Children to feminine Guardians at home.

The reasoning of *Plato* upon the manner of educating these Princes, is very just and excellent, and shews the Correspondence there was between the Manner of their Government, and the Method of their Education.

Private Families are the primary Sources of larger Societies, and the Fate of the latter depends very much upon the right management of the former.

Mr. *John* and Mr. *Thomas Risley* having finish'd their Classick Studies in the Country, under Mr. *Askworth*, Master of the School at *Warrington*, were sent to the University. Mr. *John Risley* went to *Oxford* 1648, was entred in *Pembroke-College*, and after spending some Years there, was prefer'd to a Fellowship in *New-College*, where *January* 14. 1661. he died of the New Fever, as Dr. *Willis* his Physician termed it.

In the Year 1649, Mr. *Thomas Risley* went to *Oxford*, and enter'd likewise in *Pembroke-College*, where after four Years standing, he was elected Fellow of that College, and acquir'd universal Applause, in execution of that Trust reposed in him.

It was observ'd by his Acquaintance, that he spent his Time there as a Recluse, more acquainted with

with his Study than the Theater, closely pursuing his principal Design, more to purchase useful Learning than popular Fame.

Nor is such a Solitude so incommodious as some may imagine, since it's attended with a thousand Innocencies, that a more publick Appearance is an entire Stranger to.

Our Lord Redeemer, tho' a publick Person, yet affected Obscurity and Recess from the World, so far as it did not interfere with the great Ends of his Incarnation; Deserts, Gardens and Mountains heard him pray, and were Witnesses to those Groans and Sighs in his Prayers which are unutterable; it was in the Wilderness he fed his Thousands, and on a solitary Mountain that he was transfigured, and afterwards translated.

Mr. *Risley* had opportunities of publick Converse, and indeed could scarce shun them in an University, but he studiously avoided 'em; that Fountain of Learning wherein so many study only to aggrandize themselves, he improved to his further Acquaintance with Jesus Christ the Fountain of Life, and there is no doubt but he did this upon a Conviction, that proficiency in human Literature, without a proportionable Progress in the Divine Life, is only to grasp at the Shadow, and let the Substance go; that it is a walking in a vain Show, wherein all that cometh is Vanity.

Upon November 10. 1662. he was ordain'd Deacon and Presbyter the same Day, by the then Bishop of *Norwich*, as appears by his Lordship's Certificates of his Ordination, who gives him a very honourable Character.

Before his Ordination he formed a Discourse upon *Acts* xiv. 2, 3. which he says, was to further his Meditations and Preparations for that solemn Occasion, which he thus concludes speaking to himself.

The Ministerial Function requires a great deal more strictness in thee than when thou wert a private Man; thy Example must be holy, thy Recreations few and inoffensive, thy Studies duly followed, thy Prayers frequent, thy Ends in undertaking the Ministerial Office holy and upright, without views of filthy Lucre, thy Society with thy Parish and People as occasion offers, and always to their Edification, thy Familiarity with the best Christians; thou art as a Beacon on a Hill, every one's Eye is upon thee.

His Preferment in the College he held till August 24. 1662. when he was obliged to surrender his Fellowship by the Uniformity Act, which imposed Terms he could not with a safe Conscience subscribe to; however, the respect they had for him, and the unwillingness to loose so valuable a Member of their Body, prompted them to allow him a Year to consider of the Case.

During that interval of Favour, he made it his Business to examine and study the Terms of Conformity, which he did with greatest Diligence and Impartiality, that he might be able to satisfy others as well as his own Conscience, that he was not carried away by the Prejudices of Education.

But after the utmost Scrutiny, he could not satisfy himself to Conform for any Place, how advantageous soever, upon the Conditions prescribed and required by that Act, an Act by which about 2000 Ministers were turn'd out of the Church, and which gave Birth to the present Nonconformity.

Hereunto I have annext the Instrument by which he was to have been confirmed in his Fellowship in *Pembroke-College*, under the Hands of the King's Visitors of the University of *Oxford*, with a Proviso he conformed according to the Statute.

To all Christian People to whom these Presents shall come, We the Commissioners for visiting the University of

of Oxon, with others by his Gracious Majesty duly appointed and assigned, whose Names are here under-written, send greeting. We the Commissioners aforesaid, having received sufficient Testimony of the honest Life and sober Conversation of Thomas Risley, Master of Arts, and Fellow of Pembroke-College in Oxon, as also of his Diligence in his Studies, his Progress and Sufficiency in Learning, and Conformity to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, the Government of this University, and the Statutes of the College wherein he lives, do by these Presents, ratify, allow and confirm the said Mr. Thomas Risley in his said Fellowship in Pembroke-College aforesaid, with all Rights, Dues, and all Perquisites thereunto belonging, notwithstanding any Nullities, Irregularities, or Imperfections, within a strict Interpretation of the said College Statutes, may be objected against his Election and Admission into the said Fellowship, in witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names; these Presents dated this 20th Day of June, in the Year of our Lord 1661.

Paul Hood, Vice Can.

Michael Woodward, S. Th. D.

Thomas Barlow, D. D.

Being thus deprived of his Academical Preferment, he retires to his Estate in the Country, where during the Storm of Persecution, he employed himself in preaching privately to such of his Neighbours as scrupled Conformity to the Ceremonious part of the Establish'd Worship, counting it Sacrilege to alienate himself from that Work to which he had been so solemnly devoted in his Ordination, tho' forbidden by Men, whose Commands in that Instance did, in his Apprehension, interfere with those of the Supreme Legislator.

Upon this Subject he writes thus, for which he quotes Bishop Andrews Pattern, *V. Com. viz.*

As to that which concerns our yielding Obedience to
the

the Commands of our Superiors, common Reason tells us, that when a Magistrate casts aside the Word of God, which gives him his Commission, (by me Kings reign) if it be clear and evident, that his Commands be contrary to his Commission, he ceases in that particular to be our Superior, because his Commission extends not to command against God: The Conclusion is to say with St. Peter and St. John, when the Priests and Rulers commanded them to preach no more in the Name of Jesus, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye.----Absolute Obedience is due to God only, page 330, 331, 336. on V. Com.

Conscience (adds he) is subject to God's Law immediately, to Man's Law mediately, because Conscience is the Judgment of Man upon himself, as he is subject to God's Judgment. The Doctors of Rome say, that the Laity should believe and acquiesce in what their Teachers say, without the exercise of their own Judgment of Discretion; herein lies the very Heart of Popery, and makes Ignorance the Mother of their blind Devotion.

The Turks make it Death to examine Religion, but God says, prove all things, search the Scriptures.----When we give Honour, cui non oportet, this is Idolatry, or quantum non oportet, and this is Superstition. vid. Bishop Andrews Catech. p. 180.

Love of Unity and Verity, Peace and Purity is the best Uniformity; let Unity be kept in necessary Things, Liberty in indifferent Things, and Charity in both; from hence, says Mr. Risley, we enjoy our present Gospel Liberty, and may with our conforming Brethren become Instruments for the Salvation of Sinners; to quicken us hereunto, it may not be amiss to take notice of the savory Passage of Bishop Williams to a grave Minister, who came to him for Institution and Induction.

I have (says his Lordship) pass'd thro' many Places of Honour both in Church and State, but were I assured that by my preaching I had converted but one Soul unto God,

God, I should take therein more spiritual Joy and Comfort, than in all the Honours and Offices which have been bestowed upon me. Fuller's Ch. Hist. B. II.

St. Asaph, Abbot of Bangor, had this remarkable Passage often in his Mouth, viz. Such as are against preaching of the Word of God. envy the Salvation of Mankind, *ibid.* B. I. p. 42. See 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

Ministers are the Light of the World, and is it not a great Sin to eclipse this Light by the interposition of Carnal Ordinances? Ministers are God's Seedsmen, and to whom he has committed the Plow of the Gospel, which must go forward in cold and windy Weather, as well as calm.

The other part of this clouded Interval Mr. Risley spent in visiting his poor sick Neighbours, for whose sake he apply'd himself to the Study of Physick, on purpose that he might be serviceable to their Bodies as well as their Souls; this Compassion to the Bodies of Men, which he exercised to the last, did more effectually engage their Attention when he administered Spiritual Advice to them.

In this rural Recels, his way of Living was in a chosen Obscurity, chusing rather to shine to himself and necessitous Neighbours, than to the World.

After he had been in the Country about 4 Years, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford sent him a pressing Invitation to return thither, promising him Preferment to encourage his Conformity. It's true, he had a Comperency to live on, yet the prospect of such an Addition to his Estate could not but be very inviting, and doubtless he had readily closed with such an Overture, if he could have any ways safely comply'd with the Oaths, Covenants, Subscriptions, required by the new Law, to qualify Persons for Places of Profit and Trust; he had also encouragement to Conform from Dr. Hall and Dr. Sherlock of *Winwick*, but declined it for the same reason.

Here

Here we see the Charms of the World that are such fatal Snares to others, who for such Entertainments make Shipwreck of a good Conscience, could not move him to stretch a point in favour of his Secular Interest. The respect he had to the Dictates of Conscience (God's Representative in Man) and unto the Recomence of Reward, would not permit him to consult with Flesh and Blood, or seek great Things for himself: Thus he served his Generation on self-denying Terms, chusing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, esteeming Reproach for Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of this World.

Some time after he met with a considerable Tryal that very sensibly touch'd him, but the Cloud soon blew over to his great Comfort, upon which occasion he drew up and signed a Paper (June 17. 1677) which he calls a *Memorial*, and is as follows:

The Servants of God have in all Ages bound themselves by an Oath of Allegiance to God, as their Sovereign; thus David in his own Person solemnly engaged himself as by Oath, to keep God's righteous Judgments, Psal. cxix. 106. I have sworn, and I will perform it. So 2 Chron. xv. 12. They entred into a Covenant to serve the Lord: So Ezra x. 3. Now therefore let us make a Covenant with our God. So Nehem. x. 29. They entred into a Curse, and into an Oath to walk in God's Law, imprecating God's Wrath upon themselves, if they should be false to their Oath; which federal solemn Profession of Obedience, by subscribing with the Hand the Prophet declares, Isai. xlv. 5. And another shall subscribe with his Hand unto the Lord.

One main end of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to bind me as it were by an Oath, to become God's faithful Servant; this Covenant-Oath I first entred into by my Baptism, and have often renewed it at
the

the Lord's Table, according to the Commandment, 1 Cor. xi. 23.

Oh Lord my God ! my Heart is deceitful above all things, and by Nature desperately wicked, hence it is that I have broken my Vows, but thou art a Covenant-keeping God : I sue for the promised Grace of the Covenant to perform my part, for I am without Strength, but thou hast laid help on one that is mighty, my Eyes are unto him, my hope is in his meritorious Death. Lord I perish without an Interest in the Blessings of the Covenant of Free-Grace, thro' the great Mediator thereof. Help, Lord, for his sake who is infinitely worthy ; is not thy Promise to the empty, the hungry and thirsty Sinners ? Tea, Lord, it is. Oh ! make good the Word unto thy Servant, on the which thou hast caused thy Servant to hope : Didst thou not send thy dear Son to seek and save that which is lost ?

Particularly, I humbly pray for a sanctified use of all my Afflictions, for the sake of my dear Saviour, who suffer'd and satisfy'd for my Sins ; that I being chastiz'd of the Lord, should not be condemn'd with the World : I therefore make bold in Christ's Name to prostrate my self before thy Throne : Oh, my God, be pleas'd to own this Matter I am about, it is sincerely and heartily offer'd unto thee as my free Act and Deed, to serve thee in Righteousness and Holiness all the Days of my Life, according to thy Word and my solemn Engagement made in Baptism, and renewed at the Lord's Table.

Oh blessed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my Heart will go back if I be left to my self, therefore do thou keep me by thy Power thro' Faith unto Salvation. Faithful and true art thou who hast promised, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief ; accept of this my Memorial, which by Faith in my Redeemer I have written ; it is a Witness and a Register of delivering up my self Soul and Body unto thee, against the World, the Flesh and the Devil, it stands founded on thy Word and federal Seals, which oblige me to this, or some other solemn, particular, sensible

ble Demonstration of my firm and real Covenant-Profession of my love and fear of thee for ever.

I trust in my God thro' Jesus Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for me, that this shall be confirmed in Heaven, by imprinting this Covenant-Obedience upon my Heart by the eternal Spirit, my Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter, which I here subscribe with my Hand. Amen.

THOMAS RISLEY.

Towards the latter end of K. Charles II's Reign, and beginning of K. James's, the Popish Designs ripen'd apace, for not only Protestant-Dissenters, but the best Churchmen were treated every where as Enemies to the Government, and under this pretence Multitudes were seized upon and imprisoned, and in many Places were presented for High-Crimes by pack'd Grand-Juries.

I find among Mr. Risley's Papers, a Copy of an Indictment found (at the Assizes held at Chester, Sept. 17. 1683.) against several brave Noblemen, and other worthy Patriots, for pretended Riots and Designs to assassinate his Majesty.

This County had its Share of the Storm, and among others Mr. Risley being in daily danger of a Prison, did, by Advice of his Friends, withdraw from his Habitation; and tho' in those Days a private practical Sermon was interpretative Rebellion, yet, says Mr. Risley, *I must work the Works of him that sent me*, John ix. 4.

Therefore during this Retirement, he preach'd to his Friends, whom he fortify'd against the growing Errors of Rome, and at the same time conducted them to a sure and safe Refuge; thus July 25. 1685. he discoursed on *Isai. xxvi. 20. Come my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut the Doors about thee, hide thy self as it were a little Moment, until the Indignation be overpast.* Here he considers these Chambers as Places of Protection, and shews how the

the Promises are the best hiding Places in a Storm ; and then urges on his Hearers the Duty of Prayer, as the great composer of unquiet Thoughts, (whether they spring from inward Doubts or outward Fears) and the Key God puts in our Hands to open the Door which leads to the inner Chamber of God's Presence.

When Liberty of Conscience was granted, his Neighbours, who had been his private Auditors, resolv'd themselves into a regular Society, and committed themselves to his Oversight, and they are Witnesses for him, how in his Life and Pastoral Conduct, he was righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless, as the Steward of God vigilant, sober, of good Behaviour, given to Hospitality, apt to teach, having a good Report of them that are without.

His Sermons were well studied, and tho' elaborate Compositions, yet were plain, familiar and pungent, every way adapted to the Capacities and Circumstances of his People, whose Salvation he most fervently breathed after ; this made him preach the Word, be instant in Season and out of Season, and so moving in his Exhortations, which he oft water'd with his Tears. When he preach'd abroad, it was his Custom to retire into some private Place, where he prayed just before he went into the Pulpit.

Nothing gave him so much uneasiness as an interruption in his Ministerial Work ; an Instance of this Nature happened last Winter, when by reason of his Age he could not Travel to any Place where the required Oaths were administered, it was with great difficulty he was perswaded to desist from preaching (tho' his Son supply'd for him) till some of the Justices, in Compassion to his Age, and Zeal to King GEORGE, condescended to adjourn the Court to his House, where he took the Oaths to the present Government, sincerely and heartily, without Equivocation or Mental Reservation.

That little Vacancy created him a great deal of Trouble and made him often say, *He was now useless, laid aside, and as one among the Dead* ; thus it was his Meat and Drink to preach the Gospel.

When he first preach'd, his Sermons were written at
E large,

large, but afterwards he contented himself with shorter Notes, making greater use of his Memory, which he relieved by a clear and distinct Method, and this indeed has been the common way of preaching in all Ages.

In the Primitive Church, preaching and reading so vastly differ'd, that the Readers were an Order inferiour to Presbyters; whoever is acquainted with the Fathers, will soon find, that the reading of Sermons was not the Primitive Practice.

Reading of Sermons in the Pulpit is scarcely used any where in the Christian World this Day, except *England* and the *Russian Church*, where they have a Set of Homilies to read to the People, and this is all the preaching among the *Muscovites*.

It's some reproach to Ministers, that the Gentlemen of the Law should be able to speak off-hand with so much Freedom and Ease, and those who have equal Advantages with them for improving their Minds, should have so servile a Dependence on their Notes.

As to the Holy Sacrament, tho' Mr. *Risley's* Administration of it does not pretend to any peculiarities, yet his manner of doing it was very instructive and moving; that unaffected Seriousness and awful Solemnity with which the whole was performed, convey'd a great deal of Divine Light and Warmth.

He kept close to the Original Institution, *Therefore both the Sacraments, saith he, ought to be administred for the Edification of the Body Mystical, and that without any addition to or diminution from the Original Institution, Deut. xii. 32. Thou shalt not add thereto or diminish from it. Nothing of Man ought to be obtruded in their Administration. And here he rallies the Roman Hierarchy, for adding Spittle, Salt, Oyl, and Cross to Baptism, and for worshipping Wooden Crosses, which they say, have a special Prerogative to be invocated before all other Images, therefore they adore it with largeix, which they say appertains to God only.*

The Roman Cross he thinks to be one of the greatest Idols of *Rome*; it is supposed by 'em to work Miracles, to convert Sinners, drive away Devils, and to consecrate

all

all sorts of Persons and Things. Thus *they Magnifie the Cross, and Massacre the Christian*. He cannot apprehend how any pious Intention can legitimate its Religious Use, nor (since Baptism is perfect without it) why it should be rigorously imposed upon those who scruple the lawfulness of it.

At the Baptism of every Child of his, he always prepared a Sermon suitable to that solemn Occasion; it was his Opinion, that Ordinance should be administred in the publick Assembly, and when he was obliged to do it in his own House, he always called in some of his Neighbours to be Witnesses to that religious Solemnity.

He constantly administred the Lord's Supper once in two Months, and was very careful in his Admissions, barring from the Holy Communion all the Ignorant and Immoral: Upon this occasion, I find a Paper under his Hand, which he read to his Communicants, *July 12. 1696. being an Answer to this Case of Conscience, What is required of them who desire to come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?*

The Substance of the Answer is,

1. That they must have a competent Knowledge in Religion to be able to discern the Lord's Body.

2. That they make a credible Profession, be sober and free at least from outward Scandal among Men.

3. That they personally give themselves up to Christ, and chuse him for their Portion. That they heartily repent of their past Sins and forsake 'em, and resolve, thro' the Grace of God, to lead a new Life.

4. That they keep the Sabbath holy, attend on publick Ordinances, perform Family and solitary Prayer.

5. That they promise to submit to the Censures of the Church, in case of their falling into scandalous Sin, that they may by Repentance be recovered to the Glory of God.

He thought it advisable they should promise to do all this, solemnly and deliberately before God and the Church, or a select Number of his People, that they might be Witnesses of their taking of the Baptismal Covenant upon themselves.

He secured the purity of his Church (among other Methods) by Catechising and Discipline. E 2 1.

1. By *Catechising* he turn'd 'em from Darkness to Light. No Man took more pains in giving private Instructions to every part of his Flock. He had a List of the Families to be Catechiz'd, which he examin'd in their turns, joyning 2 or 3 Families together.

2. By *Spiritual Discipline* he turn'd 'em from the power of Satan unto God. Under this Head I find a Form of Confession delivered by a Person upon re-admission.

I, A. B.--- having the Glory of God before my Face, by the Grace of God, I am made willing to make a publick Confession of my publick Sin of -----. God has made me willing hereunto, the which I had performed sooner, in case I had then been made sensible of this my present Duty, of which God now is pleased to make me sensible, I hope in order to the pardon of my Sin thro' Jesus Christ, who I trust has given me Repentance, for his Mercy endureth for ever: I beg your Prayers, that this may take that effect upon me, which is mentioned by the Apostle, to wit, the destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus; I hope you'll all joyn with me in saying Amen to the Glory of God.

May 7, 1708.

He who thus governed his Flock, was equally careful to rule his own House well, where he had his Children and Domesticks in Subjection with all Gravity; unto these he daily convey'd the best Instructions, by which their profiting now appears unto all Men.

He walked in his House with a perfect Heart, and duly performed Family Duty Morning and Evening. His Method was, after a short Prayer, to read a Chapter in the Bible, giving sometime the Sense of obscure Texts, with plain short instructive Remarks, for the improvement of his Family in Knowledge and Practice, then sung some part of a Psalm, and concluded with Prayer; thus his Eyes being daily directed upwards, gave aim and direction to his Descendants to look the same way.

He prayed without ceasing, was careful for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving, he made his Requests known unto God. All he did was sanctify'd by the Word and Prayer. He spent a great

great deal of time in his private Devotions; it was his constant Practice to pray with his Wife Morning and Evening while she lay in, over and above Family-Prayers.

By this Wife he had six Children, who are all alive, and blessing God for the rich Treasures by his Prayers laid up in Heaven for 'em, and for the good Impressions of their pious Education: He was very happy in a Conjugal Companion, being one who feared God, and managed all her Affairs with Discretion.

His Son, who succeeds him in the Ministry, went thro' a Course of Philosophy at home, before he sent him to the College at *Glasgow*; and it's observable, that he concluded every Days Instruction of him with Prayer; it's no less remarkable, that he never corrected a transgressing Child in Passion or Anger, but first went to Prayer, and in correcting always wept; and it pleased God to give 'em early Wisdom by the Rod and Reproof. *Prov. xxix. 15. and xiii. 24.* This reflects no little dishonour on those Parents who make use of the Rod, rather to gratify their own Passions, than to subdue the vicious Inclinations of the Child. We read of a Heathen, who would not chastize an offending Servant in his Passion, lest he should exceed the just bounds.

Mr. *Risley's* Congregation was compos'd of a praying People, who, by his Direction, divided themselves into several distinct praying Societies; they met frequently, which is a Practice I would recommend to all Congregations, as the best Method of keeping up mutual Love and the Life of Religion.

As soon as his Children began to speak, he taught 'em first the Lord's Prayer, and then a short Form of Prayer, which after they had learnt by Heart, he obliged 'em to say it in the proper Seasons; it were to be wish'd all Parents would do the same, for it's to be feared, most Children never pray, because their Parents never taught 'em.

His custom was to read over the Bible every Year; his Study was his Element, where he usually read 3 Chapters every Day, beginning with Prayer, and consulting the Originals and learned Commentators on difficult Texts; on this he bestowed two Hours every Day, which made him mighty in Scripture Eloquence.

The Holy Scriptures, to the search of which he particularly apply'd himself, made this Man of God perfect. Speaking of the Bible, *This (says he) is the authentick Rule, according to which Ministers and People are to be govern'd, in Doctrine, Discipline, Life and Worship.*---- No kind of Learning was so significant to him as that which contributed most to his understanding the Sacred Oracles, which Study gave him such a pleasing relish, that is not to be found in any other Book.

By his great Diligence he merited the Character of a hard Student; even in his declining Age, it was common with him to spend 8 or 10 Hours a Day in his Study, sometimes saying when dissuaded from it, *I dare not be idle.*

He did not affect to be a Party in the dividing Controversies of the Age, he trod in the old Path, and made Jesus Christ his *Alpha and Omega*, the Beginning and End of his Religion.

He profess'd himself entirely satisfy'd to the last in his Nonconformity; about 2 Years before he died, he drew up some Papers on the Subject of Conformity, the Substance of which is as follows:

The agreement of Christians in sound Doctrine and Worship, upon which they became one Body at first, is doubtless sufficient, without any addition of Man, to continue the same Union in Church Communion, i. e. Fundamental Points of Salvation are sufficient Bonds of Union and Boundaries of Communion, whatever difference in lesser Things may otherwise occur, for more in Profession cannot be absolutely necessary to Church Communion, than what in reality is necessary to Salvation; as the one constitutes the Church as visible, so the other does as invisible; and the same thing that constitutes the Church as visible, must needs invest the Members thereof in a right to its external Privileges in God's Ordinances. Wide Persuasive to Peace.

Things indifferent can't by human Laws be made necessary Conditions of Church Communion; Christians have a better right to God's Ordinances than may be taken from 'em by human Impositions, and those who would keep

keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, have need to be careful what Conditions they make and impose, lest they turn out of our Creed the Ninth Article of our Faith, for Communion of Saints, and the Second Commandment out of the Decalogue for Divine Worship.

As the Qualifications of Ministers to dispense, so of People to receive God's Ordinances, must both of 'em be taken out of Scripture; Things unnecessary, uncommanded, or of doubtful Disputation, may be forborn without any detriment to Christianity, or offence to our Conforming Brethren, or danger to the Church.

These Things he illustrates in the following manner.

1. It's a Truth without all question, That the Terms of Communion be grounded upon Divine Institution, and not upon the Traditions and Inventions of Men under what pretence soever: The Bounds of Christian Community are set down, *One Faith, one Baptism*, and not one Rite, one Opinion. So Lord Bacon in his advancement of Learning, B. 9.

This *Postulatum* he corroborates, by an Argument drawn from the dangerous Effects of Inventive Piety; how easily, saith he, did the *Pharisees* slide into Superstition, that were more for Human Inventions than Divine Institutions.

2. The Scripture tells us, that nothing ought to be the Object or Matter of Worship but what is commanded of God; 'tis not a sufficient reason to introduce any thing into Religious Worship, because it is not expressly forbidden: *Nadab* and *Abihu* were consumed by Fire, because they offer'd what was not commanded, *Levit. x. 1. Deut. xii. 28. Observe what I command thee*, ver. 32. *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it*, *Jer. xix. 5.* All Additionals of uncommanded Worship are unlawful, because they are against that second Commandment which requires us to worship God in a manner appointed by him, and therefore Worship not appointed or commanded is forbidden by him, who will accept no Homage from Christians in the Business of Religion, unless it be taught by him, and not by Men only.

Even the Ceremonial Worship under the Law was commanded

manded by God in each particular, neither was it lawful to alter or add to any of 'em: It is not then within Man's power to take in or cast out of Church Communion, by making and imposing any Ceremonials in Divine Worship, when the Worship is compleat without 'em.

3. Man can't be obliged by Man, but to what either formally or virtually he is obliged to by God, for all just Power is from God; so that if Men require the belief of any Error among the Conditions of Communion, our Obligation to Communicate with such ceaseth, and so the imputation of Schism vanishes into nothing, but lies heavy upon them for making the Separation from 'em just and necessary. *Chilling. Answ. to Pref. p. 16.*

From hence he infers, it's no safe ground for Conscience to take that for lawful which is not expressly forbidden -- And adds, That things merely indifferent, can't be made of religious Signification, without a Divine Command; therefore the best, and indeed only way to establish a firm and durable Peace in the Church, is to impose nothing in Religion but what is prescrib'd in the Written Word -- Nay more, it's certain, that all uncommanded Worship is forbidden Worship, therefore, says the Prophet, *who has required these Things at your Hands*, Isai. i. 12. they were not look'd upon as Acts of Obedience: And it's equally certain, that the Schism is of Man's making, where the Terms of Church Communion are of Man's making.

4. Our Lord Redeemer, the Head of the Church, did not make his Apostles Lords over God's Heritage, to have Dominion over the Faith of Christians; they received a Ministerial and Stewardly Power, not a Magisterial Authority to impose, as it is among Temporal Rulers, therefore he reproves Affectation of Worldly Honour and Authority, *Luke xxii. 25, 26.*

5. As to Church Discipline and Difference between *Bishops* and *Presbyters*, whether *ordine* or *gradu*, Mr. *Risley* was much of Archbishop *Usher's* Mind, in his Reduction of Episcopacy into the Synodical Form.

That every Minister has Pastoral Authority, he shews from Bishop *Jewel*, Dr. *Reynolds*, and other great Lights of

of the Church of *England*; yea, the best among the *Romanists* themselves confess it, at least in their practice of one kind, because a Presbyter ordained *per Saltum* that was never ordain'd Deacon, may notwithstanding do all those Acts which appertain to the Deacon's Order, but a Bishop ordained *per Saltum* that never had the Ordination of a Presbyter, can neither consecrate nor administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, nor ordain a Presbyter, himself being none, nor do any Act peculiarly belonging to Presbyters, by which it's evident, that that wherein a Bishop excels a Presbyter, is not a distinct Power of Order, but an Eminency or Dignity only specially yielded to one above the rest of the same Rank, for Orders sake, to preserve the Unity and Peace of the Church.

6. Bishops, Presbyters and Elders are synonymous Terms in Scripture, attributed to the same Persons, particularly *Acts* x. 17, 28.

It has been the constant Doctrine of the Church of *England*, all along from the beginning of the Reformation, 200 Years ago, to own and embrace the Protestant Ministers in *Holland, France, Helvetia, Geneva, &c.* tho' ordain'd only by Presbyters.

7. He argues from the Imperfection of Human Institutions, and from the frequent Alterations the Statute-Laws of *England* and other Countries undergo. I would only ask (says he) why the Civil State should so frequently be purged and restored by good and wholesome Laws, still devising new Remedies as fast as Time breeds Mischiefs, and contrarywise the Ecclesiastical State should still continue on the Dregs of Time, and receive no Alteration.

It was not, as he thinks, the Mind of our first Reformers to write *Ne plus ultra* to Posterity, nor to erect *Hercules's* Pillars to all coming after them, beyond which there should be no further Progress, nor that new Impositions should stand in the Christian Church to obstruct the Protestant Reformation, &c.

These were the Sentiments of this good Man concerning Conformity, yet he had a Spirit truly Charitable and Catholick; he was a Christian of the Primitive Stamp, crucify'd.

cify'd to the World, which he used as not abusing it; those Things which others pursue with so much eagerness, he look'd upon with a holy indifferency of Affection, as well knowing they are not among the necessary Ingredients of true Happiness.

His Humility, which he was so singular for, adds to the Brightness of his Character; he was a Person of an excellent Spirit, an Enemy to all Pomp and Pride in whatever Form they made their appearance, always thinking better of others than himself; the Preference he gave them was not Complemental, but real, and the genuine Fruit of that known unaffected Modesty and Meekness he was clothed with.

Humility is a mysterious Grace, it despises Honour, and yet is the ready way to acquire it; has an Aversion to Human Applause, yet is courted and admired by it; tho' this Grace be counted a Shrub of the Valley, yet it stands sure, and lasts longer than the Cedars of *Lebanon*.

He never appear'd but once in Print, and then nothing but the urgency of Conscience, and a desire of doing good to the Souls of Men, could prevail with him to publish a small Treatise, entitled *The Cursed Family*, founded upon *Prov. iii. 33. The Curse of the Lord is in the House of the Wicked*; and *Jer. x. last verse*, where Prayerless Families are numbred among Heathens in Character.

The learned Mr. How, in his Recommendatory Epistle to that Book, says, *It's an Offspring that has much of the Parents Image, appearing with no Ostentation of Learning, but wherein may be seen a pious Mind tinctur'd by much Study and Converse with Books, on acquaintance with the literate World, that begot a Habit that is rather by his Speech unwarily bewrayed, than designedly shewn.*

The scope of the Discourse shews him a Man of Thought and Prospect; discovers Thoughts intent upon the present Age, but not confin'd to it, making from it an estimate of the sad tendency of Things, and their gloomy Aspect upon the future.

While Christian Families baptiz'd in so great and venerable Names, and should, if any, be Seminaries of Religion

ligion and Virtue, are so commonly the Seed Plots of all Impiety and Wickedness, and the numerous Fountains whence Miseries and Curses are diffused among a Christian People.

In short, his Conversation was not regulated by fleshly Wisdom, but that which is from above, which is pure and peaceable. *Conscience towards God and Man is, says he, the true Foundation of Honour.*

Speaking of our unhappy Divisions and Hears, he said, they proceeded not from Religion, but from the want of it in its Purity and Perfection.

He corresponded with some of his old Fellow-Collegians to the last, particularly with Dr. Hall, late Bishop of Bristol.

My Lord, in a Letter to Mr. Risley, dated from Oxford, April 7. 1709. takes notice how much the College had been alter'd since he had been there, and that he had been at the Charge of engraving a Cut of the College in Copper, and that he would send him down half a Dozen Prints, and then in his usual Strain adds, *but here is no Place of Abode, Life is but a Pilgrimage, and I am now near the End of it, God grant we may so pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, that we at last may live together in our Father's House.*

I transcribe these Lines, not only to shew how much of the true Primitive Spirit of Christianity reigned in that venerable Person, but to make way for a Passage in his Lordship's next Letter to Mr. Risley, dated Oxford, June 20. 1709. wherein he says, *I have sent you 6 Cuts of the College, tho' by it you'll not know the whole fashion of the College, yet you'll see it's very much alter'd. I wish the Men may mend as much as the Buildings. Then concludes thus, I am very glad you have so much Strength and Ability to do so much Work for God; I wish your Labours may have a great deal of Success, and that you may have a great deal of Comfort in them, and an abundant Reward for them.*

I take a great deal of Pleasure in conversing thus with such an old Acquaintance, whom I have not seen so many Years, and am never like to see again in this World,

World, it is some Comfort to think of another World, whither if we can get, we shall live together for ever with the Lord; the Lord prepare us for our removal thither.

That excellent Bishop went to Heaven a few Years before good old Mr. *Risley*, and I doubt not but both of 'em now triumph in Glory.

Mr. *Risley*, in one of his last Letters to my Lord, speaking of his great Age, writes thus, *Let us unite our Prayers together, that Days may teach us to speak, and multitude of Years teach us Wisdom*; thus he went down to the Grave full of Years, being in the 86th Year of his Age, when he fell asleep in Jesus.

As Sin shortens the Days of the Wicked, so Holiness protracts the Age of the Righteous. Under the Old Testament, a long and prosperous Life is a Promise made to the Obedient, *Exod. xv. 26. and xxiii. 25, 26.* Fear God, says the Royal Philosopher, and thy Life shall be healthy and long, *Prov. iii. 7, 8.*

The Jewish Writers observe, that in the second Temple there were 300 High-Priests, and yet that Temple lasted but about 420 Years; and the reason of this mighty Destruction, they say, was their scandalous Impieties, for which God shorten'd their Days. And yet in the first Temple, that stood near as long as the second, there was a Succession but of 18 High-Priests, for they being generally pious, God rewarded them with long Life.

Thus Mr. *Risley* was bless'd with a good Old Age, his Race was not ended till he was full of Years, which when finished, he compleated his determined Course in a troublesome Wilderness, pass'd through the rough Streams of *Jordan*, and is now enter'd into the promis'd Land, the Habitation of the Divine Presence, where God makes his rich Goodness to diffuse it self, and flow upon him in Rivers of Pleasure for evermore; there we leave him in possession of the purchased Inheritance, surrounded with infinite variety of agreeable Objects, that strike his Eyes with an amazing and unutterable Joy.

7 00 63

F I N I S.